

oven, extended horizontally upon the straw by blowing gently and steadily through the straw, as one uses a blow-pipe. Too forcible inflation will make the caterpillar unsightly by distending unnaturally any spot that may have been weakened or bruised in the previous operation; the caterpillar should be kept slowly but constantly turning, and no harm will result from withdrawing the creature from the oven and allowing it to collapse, to gain breath or rest; only this relaxation should be very brief. The caterpillar should be first introduced into the oven while inflated by the breath, and so placed that the hinder extremity shall be in the hottest part, directly above the flame, for it is essential that the animal should dry from behind forward; yet not altogether, for as soon as the hinder part has begun to stiffen (which can readily be detected by withholding the breath for a second) the portion next in front should receive partial attention, and the caterpillar moved backward and forward, round and round over the flame. During this process any tendency of the caterpillar to assume unnatural positions may be corrected—at least in part—by withdrawing it from the oven and manipulating it; during inflation, the parts about the head should be the last to dry and should be kept over the flame until a rather forcible touch will not cause it to bend.

To secure the best results, it is essential that the oven should not be too hot; the flame should not be more than an inch high, and its tip should be one or two inches from the bottom of the oven.

When the skin of the caterpillar will yield at no point, it is ready for mounting. The pin is removed from the straw and the caterpillar skin, which often adheres to the straw, must be gently removed with some delicate, blunt instrument, or with the finger nail.

A piece of wire a little more than twice the length of the caterpillar is next cut, and, by means of forceps, bent as in fig. 21, the tips a little incurved; a little shellac* is placed at the distal extremity of the loop, the wire is held by the forceps just beyond this point, so as to prevent the free ends of the wire from spreading, and they are introduced into the empty body of the caterpillar as far as the forceps will allow; holding the loop and gently opening the forceps, the caterpillar is now pushed over the wire with extreme care, until the hinder extremity has passed half-way over the loop, and the shellac has smeared the interior sufficiently to hold

* To prepare this, the sheets of dark shellac should be preferred to the light, and dissolved in forty per cent. alcohol.